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Memorial from the Legislature of Montana, in relation to the protection of the Yellowstone Valley and the road from Bismarck, in Dakota, to Bozeman, in Montana

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YELLOWSTONE VALLEY.

MEMORIAL

FROM

THE LEGISLATURE OF MONTANA,

IN RELATION TO

The protection of the Yellowstone Valley and the road from Bismarck, in Dakota, to Bozeman, in Montana.

MARCH 23, 1874.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled :

Your memorialists, the legislative council and house of representatives composing the legislative assembly of the Territory of Montana, would respectfully represent—

That the settlements of the said Territory are isolated from the other inhabited and civilized portions of the national domain, with which they can only communicate for purposes of travel and transportation, (except for a short season each year,) by means of the stage-coach and the freight-wagon.

Ever since the closing of the Bozeman and Bridger roads, reaching from the head-waters of the North Platte to those of the Missouri, and the abandonment of Forts Reno and C. F. Smith, our route of communication with the States east of us has been for the most part by way of the settlements of the Territory of Utah, the circuitry of which adds greatly to the expense, tediousness, and delay of our intercourse with the East.

Your memorialists anticipate, within a very few years, the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad through the Yellowstone Valley to the now eastern limit of our settlements; and the military expedition under Lieut. Col. E. D. Baker along the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad from Fort Ellis eastward, and the more recent expedition of General Stanley from Bismarck westward, have defined a line of communication with the now completed portion of the said railroad, shorter by many hundred miles than the said route by way of Utah, heretofore pursued, affording a direct outlet to market for our herds of cattle and other products, for want of which our said products have hitherto been of little value, traversing a country of abundant pasturage, of surpassing fertility, well watered, and supplied with timber, and in all respects

more inviting to the herdsman, the agriculturist, and the miner than any portion of Montana now settled.

The allurements of the mineral wealth of the mountains fringing that great valley, and of the agricultural facilities aforesaid, impel our pioneers and adventurers in that region, notwithstanding the implacable hostility of the savage hordes with which it is infested.

The exigencies of trade will in the ensuing summer cause numerous and doubtless successful attempts to navigate the Yellowstone River, determining the feasibility of transportation by means of steamboats upon that stream.

That great national enterprise, the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad, must of necessity push its way westward with all possible rapidity, both by reason of the terms of its charter and the wants of the nation.

The necessity of a large body of troops to enable the engineers of the said railroad to locate their lines in this region demonstrates to your memorialists that to insure the safety of our citizens, and to guard and protect the objects and interests above alluded to, the immediate presence of a large and well-appointed armed force along the said line of communication between Fort Ellis, in Montana, and the town of Bismarck, in Dakota, is necessary.

Wherefore your memorialists pray that such action may be taken as in your wisdom you may deem expedient to the protection of the objects and interests aforesaid.

And your petitioners will ever pray, &c.

G. W. STAPLETON,
President of the Council.

JOHN H. ROGERS,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Approved February 7, 1874.

B. F. POTTS,
Governor.

A true copy.

Attest:

A. M. S. CARPENTER,
Chief Clerk of the Council.